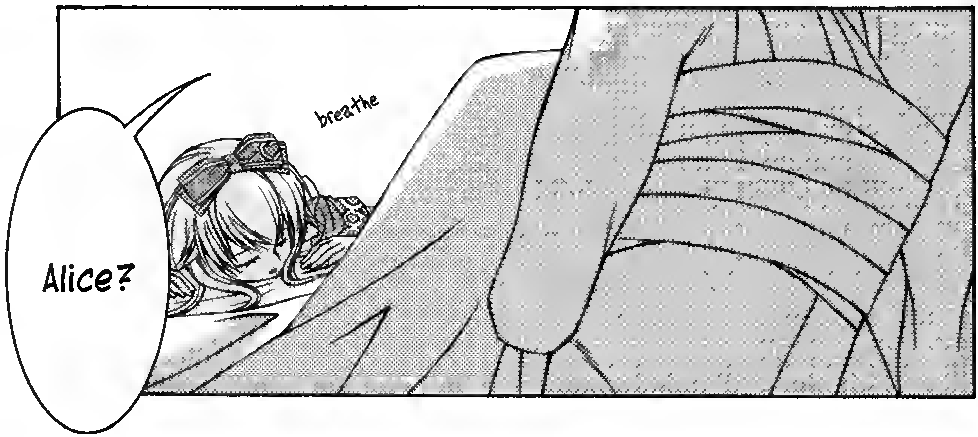
Ouch...
rustle
It still hurts a little...


breathe
Alice?

FLINCH
Stop it...
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD IF YOU SLEEP THERE.
Nnn
STOP IT, GRAY!
STOP IT!
. . .

STOOO OOP!!
. . .
Nnn.
I MADE YOU GO THROUGH A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE, DIDN'T I?
HUH?

I FELL ASLEEP WITHOUT MEANING TO...
LAST THING I REMEMBER ...I WAS SITTING BY GRAY'S..
WAIT!
WHERE'S GRAY!?
whip
HIS BLEEDING HAD ALREADY STOPPED,
SO HE'S MOST LIKELY OUT OF DANGER NOW,
BUT I WONDER IF HE'S WELL ENOUGH TO BE UP ALREADY...
ALICE...
I LOVE YOU...
AH!

BLUSH
creak)
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
N-NIGHT-MARE?
How am I supposed to take them?
T-That wasn't a dream, right?
Those words...
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
HE'S MOVING AROUND ALREADY?!
ba-dump
G-Gray?
Because you weren't in your room I...um...
Is your injury okay?
click)
ba-dump
Uh...
Umm
ba-dump

THANKS TO YOU TAKING CARE OF ME
YOU HAVE MY GRATI-TUDE.
YES, I'M FINE NOW.
AH...
ba-dump
ba-dump
NOT AT ALL, I SHOULD BE THE ONE SAYING THANKS.
THANK YOU FOR RESCUING ME
Hmm?
I WAS ABOUT TO CHECK UP ON MY SUBORDI-NATES
AND GO PATROLLING AROUND THE TOWN.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. ANYWAY, YOU HAVE GREAT TIMING.
click
.....
It's the usual Gray.
I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO KEEP WATCH ON LORD NIGHTMARE.
UH, SURE

I wonder if it was a dream after all.
"I LOVE YOU..."
perk
WHERE ARE THE ITEMS FOR THIS?
HERE, THIS ONE.
HOW'S PROG-RESS?
WHA-
SIR G-GRAY!!
YOU?
S-S-S-SORRY SIR!
WE'RE ONLY ABOUT HALF DONE...
.....
Assembling the documents is proving to be more challenging than expected...

HUH?
EH?
ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME?
STEP
Why am I asking something obvious?
They know the real me.
Being afraid is a given.
STEP
turn
NOTHING. PLEASE CONCENTRATE ON ACCURACY RATHER THAN SPEED.
Y-YES SIR.
STEP
STEP
That is how I am.
I'm such a...
clench
I should have left the fighting to the March Hare and the Cheshire Cat,
And prioritized getting Alice to safety.

DAMN IT!
IT'S NOT A DREAM.
THEN WHAT DID IT MEAN!?
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW?
ASK THE PERSON IN QUESTION HIMSELF!
HMM?
I FEEL LIKE I SAID SOMETHING SIMILAR BEFORE...
I WOULDN'T BE SO TROUBLED IF I COULD ASK THAT SO EASILY.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT GRAY HERE.
HE MIGHT SAY SOMETHING THAT HE LIKES ME AS A FAMILY MEMBER, OR MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE ISTER
AND THAT WOULD BE PROBLEM FOR YOU?
grrr
HA...

. . .
I... CAN'T.
I'M NOT PRETTY, NOR DO I HAVE A PLEASANT CHARACTER...
EVEN IF GRAY DOES LIKE ME,
jolt
THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE HESITANT TO ASK, ISN'T IT?
IT'S PROBABLY ONLY BECAUSE
. . .
BECAUSE YOU'RE 'AN OUTSIDER'?
. . .
put
THAT'S WHAT YOU BELIEVE. AM I RIGHT?

You know, Alice.
You're that type of person.
EVEN IF YOU VIEWED YOURSELF AS BEAUTIFUL,
YOU'RE THAT TYPE OF PERSON WHO WOULD HAVE FUSSED ABOUT HIM LIKING YOU JUST FOR YOUR LOOKS AND NOT THE REAL YOU.
TELL ME, ARE YOU UNABLE TO ACCEPT HIS CONFESSION UNLESS HE TELLS YOU THAT
HE'D LOVE YOU EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T AN OUTSIDER?
IF HE DOES DO SO,
WON'T YOU FIND SOME NEW SUBJECT TO FRET OVER?
GRIN
YOUR EXPECTATIONS AREN'T PLAUSIBLE.
smoke

WHY DON'T YOU USE THAT AS A WEAPON?
smoke
WEAPON?
YES.
BEING AN OUTSIDER IS A WEAPON POSSESSED BY YOU ALONE.
IT'S THE SAME THING AS BEING BORN WITH SUPERIOR LOOKS.
OR YOU CAN SIMPLY THINK OF IT AS A TYPE OF ABILITY.
USING ONE'S TALENT TO GAIN SOMEONE'S ATTENTION IS...
WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE?
THAT WAY OF LOOKING AT IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, HUH.

I FEEL LIKE I'M GETTING LOVE ADVICE FROM A FEMALE FRIEND EXPERIENCED N ROMANCE~
HMM?
FEMALE FRIEND?
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA, NIGHT-MARE!
Oh, you finally get it!
I'm great, yup!
EHEHE
SO I CAN DISCUSS ALL SORTS OF THINGS WITH YOU FREELY TALKING TO YOU IS SO COMFORT-ABLE~
BECAUSE I KNOW EVERYTHING WILL BE EXPOSED TO YOU EVEN IF I TRY TO BE EVASIVE, I CONVINCED MYSELF TO NOT EVEN TRY.
SO THAT MAKES ME A FEMALE FRIEND?
SUCH AN EVALUATION DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY
.....
I'M TRULY GLAD, NIGHT-MARE.
THAT YOU'RE HERE WITH ME.

THANK YOU.
.....
SLIDE
SO IT SEEMS.
BUT...
HE'S NOT AS MATURE AS YOU FIRST THOUGHT. HE'S NOT A GOOD PERSON EITHER.
creak
CLUNK
HMM?
I'M NOT A GOOD PERSON EITHER.
STEP
SO...
I'M DRAWN TO HIM EVEN MORE NOW.
STEP
GOOD TO KNOW.
smoke

Come to think of it...
Gray was asking about whether the rumors about Alice And the Hatter were true.
SMOKE
I'M TRULY GLAD, NIGHTMARE.
THAT YOU'RE HERE WITH ME.
.....
I'M NO MATCH FOR YOU,
ALICE.
.....
Looking around
I received reports that the bombings had stopped, but I couldn't help but check.

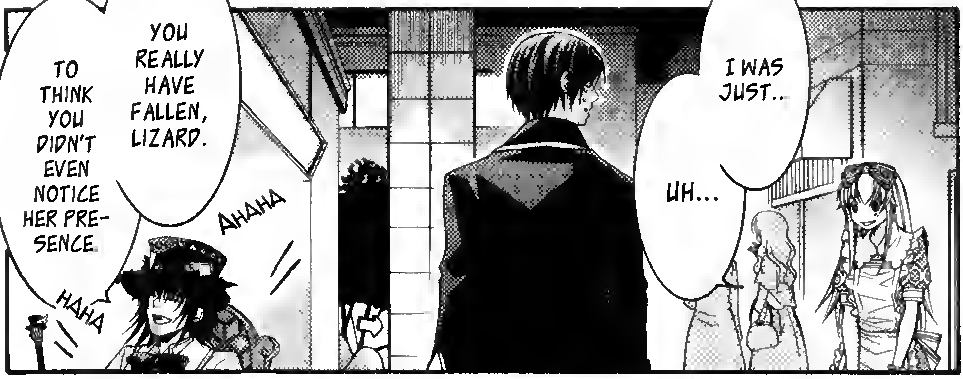
The Mafia disputes appear to have settled dow-
turn
Grin
.....
SLIDE

ARE YOUR FIGHTS OVER?
YES.
I HEAR YOU ALSO HELPED. LET ME EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE.
turn
IS THE YOUNG LADY STILL AT THE TOWER?
GIVE THE MARCH HARE MY THANKS FOR THE TROUBLE HE WENT THROUGH FOR ME.
.....
SHE DOESN'T APPEAR TO HAVE RETURNED TO HER PLACE IN TOWN.
YES, SHE IS.
SHE WAS IN LORD NIGHTMARE'S ROOM WHEN I LEFT.
I SEE. THEN I SHALL VISIT HER PLACE AFTERWARDS.
I'VE ACQUIRED SOME DELICIOUS TEA THAT I'D LOVE TO SHARE WITH HER.
chuckle

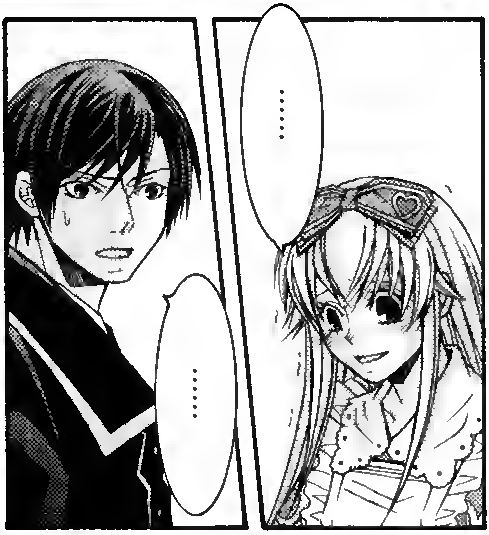
AFTER MARRYING HER, YOU WOULD WANT TO HAVE HER LIVE AT THE HATTER MANSION, RIGHT?
WHAT IS YOUR STANCE ON HER WORKING AT THE TOWE-
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
pfft
haha
.....
HATTER...
WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS REGARDING ALICE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S NOTHING. AS FOR YOUR QUESTION, I DON'T REALLY KNOW.
THE YOUNG LADY IS SPECIAL, YOU SEE
AS THE AIDE OF THE DREAM DEMON, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS?
SHE HELPS US OUT A LOT
LORD NIGHTMARE IS ALSO BETTER MOTIVATED TO WORK WHEN SHE'S AROUND..
AND YOUR PERSONAL OPINION?

AS AN INDIVI-DUAL?
YES.
looking around
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE YOUNG LADY?
...YOU KNOW WHAT SORT OF PERSON I AM.
WHAT I ASKED FOR WAS YOUR OPINION AS AN INDIVIDUAL.
IF I HAD THE OPTION, I'D KEEP HER AWAY FROM PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF.

PERSON-
ALLY...
IT'D BE
EASIER
FOR ME
IF ALICE
WEREN'T
AROUND.
GRIN
OH, I
SEE.
HOW
UNFORTUNATE
FOR YOU,
YOUNG
LADY.
GASP!
ALICE...
AH...


I WAS JUST..
UH...
YOU REALLY HAVE FALLEN, LIZARD.
AHAHA
TO THINK YOU DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE HER PRESENCE.
HAHA

ALICE!
turn


.....
.....

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU WON'T CHASE HER?

flinch

clench

GASP
grin
.....
I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO. ISN'T THAT YOUR ROLE?
GLARE
THE RUMORS WERE FALSE!?
turn
CLANG

SHOVE
YOU'VE LOST YOUR EDGE, LIZARD.

10/6
YOU DON'T GET TO SAY THAT WITH THE WAY YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING AROUND.
WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT.
HAHA
HAHAHA
PFFT
DASH

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT,
IT SEEMS LIKE THEY WILL KEEP ENTERTAINING ME FROM NOW ON.
TAP
TAP
WAIT!
JOLT
I knew it!
I'm nothing but a nuisance to Gray!
TAP
And yet I was acting like a fool...
Getting excited all on my own.
TAP

SLASH!!
THE HATTER'S-
YOU'RE THAT GIRL!
W-WHAT?
ARGH!
clatter
YOU'RE ONE OF THE STRAGGLERS FROM THE DEFEATED MAFIA GROUP, AREN'T YOU?
SHE ISN'T RELATED TO THE HATTER FAMILY IN ANY WAY.
IF YOU HAVE BUSINESS WITH THEM, GO TO THE HATTER MANSION DIRECTLY.

I'm sorry!
I'm troubling you again...
ALICE!
pull away
GRAY!
SHIT!
DASH
I...
It seems like I misunderstood...
I know now. That kiss...
Gray did those things to only calm me down in the face of danger.
That confesion...
ENOUGH ALREADY!
ALICE... THAT'S NOT IT. BACK THERE I...
I GREW SPOILED AND KEPT PUTTING YOU IN A SPOT
BECAUSE YOU WERE KIND TO ME ..

ALICE!
VERK
I'LL STOP WORKING AT THE TOWER!
AND WON'T APPEAR IN FRONT OF YOU EVER AGAIN!
STAB
I'M NOT A KIND PERSON.
I BEG YOU...
PLEASE CALM DOWN AND LISTEN
...GRAY?
AH...

THAT IS THE REAL ME.
click
BUT YOU DID THAT TO RESCUE ME-
AH!
THAT MOMENT...
Pulls out
DURING THAT MOMENT
YOU SAW ME, DIDN'T YOU?

He's trembling?
I...I'M DIFFERENT FROM YOU, ALICE.
GRAY?
I'M NOT THE TYPE OF MAN YOU BELIEVE ME TO BE.
I'M NOT MATURE OR SERIOUS, NOR AM I A KIND PERSON.

"WHAT HE'S AFRAID OF IS HIS TRUE NATURE BEING EXPOSED. THAT MAN DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO PROTECT THE THINGS MOST PRECIOUS TO HIM."
SOMETIMES I AM TEMPTED TO DO THE CRAZIEST THINGS TO YOU.
...GRAY?
BUT I...
I CAN'T CONTROL MYSELF.
HIDE YOU IN SHACKLES IN A PLACE KNOWN TO ONLY ME...
Was this...
What Nightmare was referring to?

When he said that I destroy Gray's balance?
GRAY, PLEASE TELL ME.
I TRY TO GIVE YOU A GOOD IMPRESSION OF MYSELF SO YOU WOULD STAY BY MY SIDE.
EVEN THOUGH I KNOW... THAT IT'D BE BETTER FOR ME TO STAY AWAY FROM YOU..

BACK THEN..
"ALICE..."
WHAT YOU SAID WHEN YOU RESCUED ME...
DO YOU REMEMBER IT?
THAT'S...
YOU'RE SO UNFAIR TO ASK IT LIKE THAT.
RIGHT NOW YOU MIGHT SIMPLY BE FEELING PITY FOR MY CURRENT STATE.
THAT'S NOT AN ANSWER.
BACK THEN I ENDED UP SAYING IT IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT...
YOU SEEMED SO LOVELY CRYING FOR MY SAKE, AND...
WERE THOSE WORDS TRUE? OR WAS THAT CONFESSION A LIE?
.....
IT WASN'T... A LIE...
JOLT

A-
THAT'S ALL I NEEDED TO KNOW!
IF THOSE WORDS WERE TRUE, THEN THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.
ALICE...
"ALICE..."
"ALICE..."
"SOON... YOU'LL FIND SOMEONE WONDERFUL..."
"WHO WILL TREASURE YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE."

THE MAN I LOVE...
GRAY MIGHT NOT BE THE TYPE OF PERSON MY SISTER HAD IN MIND FOR ME.
I'M FINE WITH ANY-THING.
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT TO ME, NO MATTER HOW CRAZY. I DON'T MIND EVEN BEING LOCKED AWAY SOMEWHERE IF IT'S WITH YOU.
ALICE...
I'M NOT CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO CLAIM THAT I'M TREASURED ABOVE EVERY-ONE,
BUT...

HE SAID THAT HE LOVES ME.
I LOVE YOU TOO, GRAY.
THAT'S WHY HEARING YOU SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME IS ENOUGH FOR ME TO ACCEPT EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.
I'M OKAY WITH ANYTHING. SO PLEASE, GRAY...

ROLL
ROLL
Oh no, I dropped one.
Even if they were cheap, you bought way too much.
SAY IT AGAIN?

Isn't it fine? You love apple pie.
Even so, the amount is too much.
giggle
Mmnn
Haa
ALICE...
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP

ba-dump
I LOVE YOU.
GRAY...
ME TOO.
I ALSO LOVE y-
!
REALIZE

GRIN
ISN'T ANYTHING FINE AS LONG AS THERE IS LOVE?
YEAH.
Eeeh!?
U-UM, GRAY?
COULD IT BE THAT YOU WANT TO... RIGHT HERE?
Your hands are!!
JOLT
You... must be joking!
I mean there are people on the other side of the wall...
I love you, Alice.
Ah~ ♥

END

QuinRose Box

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